safety of ethnic Indians in South Africa after majority rule had been established.

Sharing of river water among A.P., Karnataka and Maharashtra

415. DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI. Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra met thrice during the last year to discuss the sharing of river waters; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHIR MANUBHAI KOTADIA): (a) and (b) The Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra met twice during the last year to discuss the issues relating to the Telugu Ganga Project and sharing of surplus Krishna waters. After discussing various alternative proposals, it was agreed by them to examine these proposals in respective States and to meet again.

Decision to stop refueling of U.S. aircrafts

416. DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI:
DR. G. VIJAYA MOHAN REDDY:
SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA:
SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA:
SHRIMATI MIRA DAS:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to stop refuelling of US Air-force planes on Indian airports;

(b) who permitted the refuelling of such warships while war is on between belligerent countries at present in the Gulf countries and when;

(c) the number of times the aircrafts refuelled and at which Air Ports, alongwith the number of such aircrafts; and

(d) whether Iraq has protested against refuelling permitted by India; if so, what is the response of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI KAMAL MORARKA): (a) Transit and refuelling of US Air Force transport aircraft in India has stopped with effect from 20th February, 1991, following the withdrawal of the request for such a facility to the US Government.

(b) The Government permitted the transit and refuelling of US Air Force transport aircraft for the sole purpose of carrying non-lethal cargo and for evacuation of personnel on humanitarian, medical and emergency grounds. These facilities were not provided for combat aircraft.

(c) Since the Gulf crisis 136 US air force transport aircraft were given transit and refuelling facilities at Bombay, Madras, Agra and Nagpur.

(d) No, Sir. Government have, however, seen the statement issued by the Government of Iraq on this issue. Government have explained to the Government of Iraq that the transit and refuelling facilities provided to US Air Force transport aircraft was solely for the purpose of transporting non-lethal cargo and for evacuating personnel on humanitarian, medical and emergency considerations.

"Deforestation and afforestation by paper manufacturers"

417. DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 2402 given in the Rajya Sabha on 28th August, 1990 and state:

(a) whether it is a fact that non-afforestation by paper manufacturers to the extent they deforest is an ecological irresponsibility; and

(b) if so, what steps are being taken to prevent such want on destruction of forests for private gain?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND

FORESTS (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) Afforestation of deforested area is an ecologically desirable objective, irrespective of the purpose for which such deforstation has taken place.

(b) The National Forest Policy, 1988 provides that as far as possible a forest based industry should meet its raw material requirements, preferably by establishment of a direct relationship between the factory and the individuals who can grow the raw materials on their lands. It also provides that natural forests will not be made available to industries for meeting their need of raw materials.

Besides, Import of pulp and waste paper has been put on OGL and the import duty on these items is also kept relatively low and use of agricultural waste for manufacture of paper is being actively supported and encouraged by the Government.

These measures are expected to reduce the demand of forest based industry on forests for raw materials.

"Ban on felling of trees for sleepers for Railways"

418. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have banned felling of trees for sleepers for railways and asked the railways to grow their own trees; and

(b) whether Government propose to ban use of wooden sleepers for railways and also compel them to grow trees on their land failing which unused land should be confiscated and used for growing trees?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Government propose to phase out use of wooden sleepers by Railways through substitution by alternative material. Wherever possible plantations are already being done on land of Railway Department.

Effect of refuelling of U.S. war planes on the war scenario

419. DR. G. VIJAYA MOHAN REDDY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the U.S. have threatened to use nuclear weapons against Iraq in utter disregard to world public opinion;

(b) whether Governments policy of allowing U.S. war planes to be refuelled in Bombay and Madras, would encourage the U.S. in its aggressive policy; and

(c) whether the Government of India have expressed their protest to the U.S. Government against such threat ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI KAMAL MORARKA): (a) During a television interview on 2 February 1991, US Vice President Quayle said: "I just can't imagine President Bush making the decision...to use chemical or nuclear weapons under any circumstances."

The US Vice President suggested that allied conventional forces were so superior that a "proper response" to a first use of chemical weapons by the Iraqis "would be to continue our very devastating campaign with conventional weapons". He indicated however that the administration will "never rule any options out".

(b) The Government allowed transit and refuelling facilities only for transport aircraft. This facility was given on a clear assurance from the US Government that the transport aircraft would be used solely for transporting non-lethal supplies and for evacuation of personnel on humanitarian, medical and emergency grounds.

(c) Government have issued a statement on 8 February 1991, expressing deep concern on this issue. A copy of the *statement* is attached.

Statement

Government of India is deeply concerned over statements made recently by the parties engaged in the Gulf conflict, emanating from very high levels, regarding the possible use of nuclear and chemical weapons. The use of chemical wea-